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## CHICAGO HOUSING CONDITIONS, IV: THE WEST SIDE REVISITED

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The report on *Tenement House Conditions in Chicago* which was published by the City Homes Association in 1901 was based on a house-to-house canvass made in three of the most densely populated neighborhoods of the "West Side," which is itself the most densely populated section of the city—a wide tenement and lodging-house district lying between the two branches of the River, lying also between wide stretches of railroad tracks, and inclosed by a dense semicircular belt-line of manufacturing and commercial plants. Three districts were selected for an intensive study by a committee of the City Homes Association. The first of these was a large territory of forty blocks lying between Halsted Street and the River, in the Italian and Jewish quarter near Hull House, and in the Ninth and Nineteenth wards; the second, a group of eight blocks in the Bohemian district toward the South Branch of the River in the Tenth Ward; and the third, a group of ten blocks in the Sixteenth Ward in the Polish region toward the North Branch. In undertaking a new inquiry into tenement-house conditions in Chicago nearly a decade after the City Homes Committee made its report, it seemed important to revisit the districts which were investigated in 1901 in order to ascertain how far conditions might have changed since that time. A careful house-to-house canvass was therefore made

again in a single selected block in each of the first two districts, and in each of the ten blocks in the Polish district in the Sixteenth Ward.

The recent publication of the population statistics<sup>1</sup> for Chicago by the federal Census Bureau are also of value in connection with the question of crowding in these West Side wards. These statistics showed that in the city as a whole the average population per acre was 19.7. The Ninth and Tenth wards, which include

TABLE I\*  
RELATIVE DENSITY OF CHICAGO POPULATION BY WARDS

Average Number of People per Acre	Ward	Division of City
97.36.....	Seventeenth	West Side
90.66.....	Nineteenth	West Side
81.52.....	Sixteenth	West Side
80.79.....	Tenth	West Side
77.14.....	Twentieth	West Side
70.00.....	Ninth	West Side
55.40.....	Twenty-third	North Side
53.37.....	Fifteenth	West Side
53.50.....	Second	South Side
51.48.....	Eleventh	South Side
51.37.....	Twenty-second	North Side
49.00.....	Twenty-first	North Side
48.05.....	Third	South Side
46.95.....	Sixth	South Side
48.81.....	Twenty-fourth	North Side
41.22.....	Fourteenth	West Side
40.88.....	Eighteenth	West Side
40.08.....	Thirtieth	South Side

\* In the following wards the average number of people per acre was under 40: Twenty-eighth (West Side), Thirteenth (West Side), Twelfth (West Side), Fourth (South Side), Fifth (South Side), Twenty-fifth (North Side), Seventh (South Side), Thirty-fourth (West Side), First (South Side), Twenty-sixth (North Side), Twenty-ninth (South Side), Thirty-fifth (West Side), Thirty-second (South Side), Thirty-first (South Side), Twenty-seventh (West-Jefferson), Thirty-third (South Chicago), Eighth (South Chicago).

the "Ghetto" and the poor district about the lumber yards and canals, have a density of 70 and 80.8 per acre; the Nineteenth Ward, the crowded immigrant section in which Hull House is situated, has 90.7 people per acre; the Seventeenth Ward, a similarly poor and crowded tenement-house district, has a density of 97.4; and the Sixteenth Ward, a Polish neighborhood, has a population averaging 81.5 per acre. In the foregoing table which

<sup>1</sup> See the Chicago daily papers for April 26, 1911.

was prepared from the recently published Census statistics and which shows the relative density of population in all of the wards having 40 or more people per acre, it appears that the six most densely populated wards which have more than 70 people per acre are all on the West Side.

It should be made clear that the area of the wards from which the statistics for average population per acre were computed was in every case the gross area, including the streets and alleys. If the net area were taken, the true density would be found to be much greater. In 1901 the net area was computed for the 44 blocks in the district east of Hull House (Ninth and Nineteenth wards) and the ten blocks in the Sixteenth Ward, and it was found that one block contained 457 people to the acre, another 412, seven others, between 300 and 400. Table II shows the density in 1901 of these 54 blocks computed on the basis of the net area of the blocks in acres.

TABLE II\*

DENSITY OF 54 BLOCKS IN THE NINTH, NINETEENTH, AND SIXTEENTH WARDS IN 1901

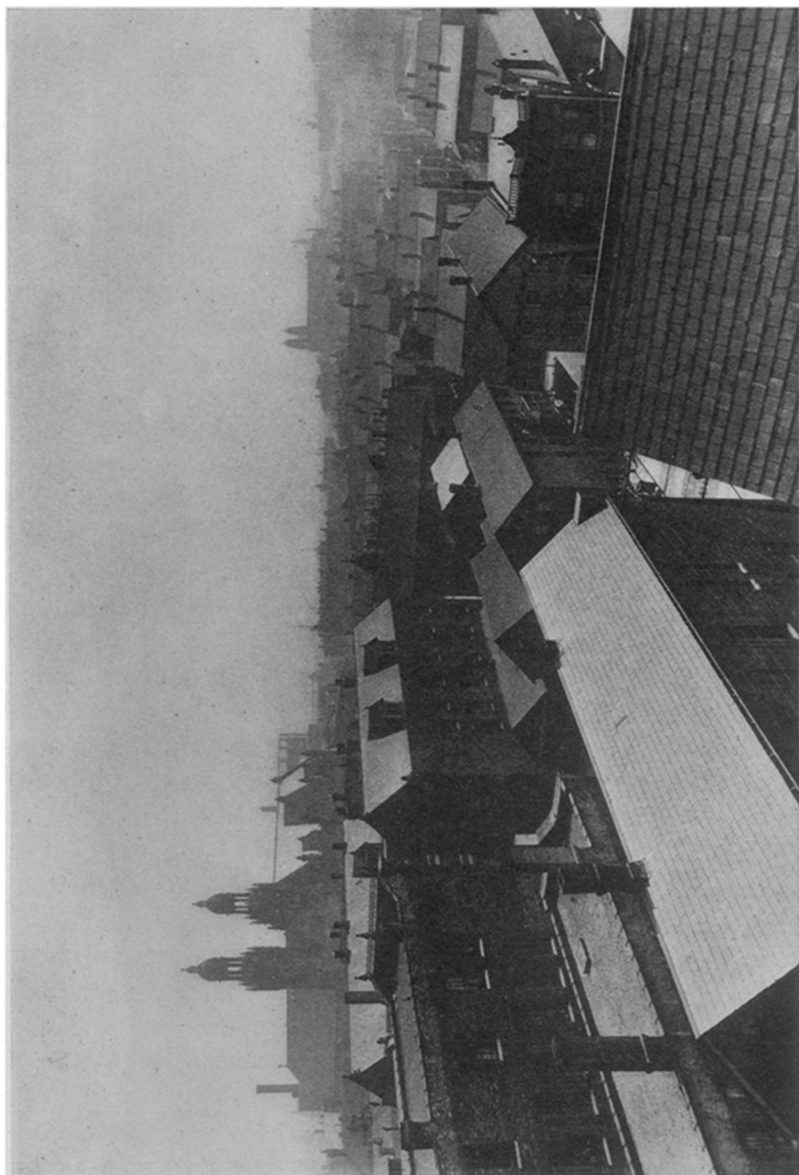
DENSITY	WARDS		
	Ninth	Nineteenth	Sixteenth
Less than 150 people per acre . . . . .	4	..	..
150 and less than 200 . . . . .	4	7	..
200 and less than 250 . . . . .	4	6	1
250 and less than 300 . . . . .	5	8	1
300 and less than 350 . . . . .	2	1	2
350 and less than 400 . . . . .	1	1	5
400 and less than 450 . . . . .	..	1	..
450 and less than 500 . . . . .	..	..	1
	20	24	10

\*Table II is compiled from the first table on p. 55 of *Tenement House Conditions* (*City Homes Report*).

These figures show a striking contrast to those in the preceding table. According to Table I the average density of the Nineteenth Ward is only 97.36, but Table II shows that in the group of 24 blocks canvassed in the same ward all had more than 150 people per acre and eleven had more than 250 people. The average density of the Sixteenth Ward was 81.52, but here again all of the 10 blocks canvassed show more than 200 people

per acre and 8 of the 10 blocks had more than 300 per acre. The average density of the Ninth Ward was only 70 people per acre, but only 4 in the group of 20 blocks canvassed had fewer than 150 people per acre and 8 had 250 or more.

In the Jewish and Italian district, which is the largest of the three, there have been some obvious changes in the decade which has elapsed since the City Homes investigators went over the territory. Factories and business houses have been moving across Canal Street and into the heart of the district from the more obviously commercial streets, like Twelfth, Fourteenth, Halsted, and Jefferson. In a sense the whole territory between Halsted and the River, one might even say between Center Avenue and the River, from the South to the North Branch, is awaiting the business invasion. Needed repairs on old houses, the proper building of new houses, improvements of every kind are postponed because of the current belief that this whole territory is in the near future to be taken over for commercial and industrial uses. In the meantime, while landlords and dealers wait, poor people continue to live in insanitary houses, tuberculosis breeds there, children grow up in dark, ill-ventilated rooms, without proper space for play. It is true, to be sure, that although few improvements have taken place in the houses themselves, there have been some improvements in the district as a whole. The Juvenile Court and Detention Home have taken the place of some of the old houses on Ewing Street, and farther down on the same street other houses have been moved to make room for the rebuilt Dante School with its new playground. At the other end of the district, in the Ninth Ward, the Maxwell Street Settlement has been established, and a little farther south in the same ward the Washburne School, the Henry Booth House, and one of the new West Parks have made an oasis which in some measure redeems one small portion of this waste of dilapidated houses. Unfortunately, the clearing of areas for these improvements has not meant the destruction of the old frame houses which occupied them. These were in most instances sold at a very low rate and the enterprising neighborhood landlords, who bought them, moved their old houses to the rear and



A VIEW OF THE POLISH DISTRICT NEAR THE CHURCH OF ST. STANISLAUS

placed the new ones in the front spaces thus vacated. The result has been an even greater congestion on the portions of the block still occupied for residential purposes.

The block selected for the recanvass in this first district was the one bounded by Canal, Jefferson, Liberty, and Maxwell streets at the south end of the district in the Ninth Ward. In this block, which covers only 2.8 acres, 1,033 people were found—369 people to the acre. It is very significant that, in 1901, the report of the City Homes Association showed only 917 people in the same block, so that there has been an increase of 116 in the block population. This increase is more serious than the number indicates, for several houses have been moved to make room for a large factory which has been built on Canal Street, and either more houses have been moved on the already overcrowded lot areas, or the overcrowding within the houses has become worse. In the Bohemian neighborhood in the Tenth Ward, the block selected for recanvass was the one bounded by Nineteenth, Twentieth, Throop, and Loomis streets. In this block 1,239 people were found. It is unfortunately not possible to compare these figures with those for 1901 since there is no way of correctly determining the method of block numbering used in the report of the City Homes Association for this district.

Table III shows the composition of the block population of the two blocks recanvassed in these two districts.

TABLE III  
COMPOSITION OF BLOCK POPULATION

DISTRICTS	MEMBERS OF FAMILY GROUPS			LODGERS	TOTAL POPULATION
	Adults	Children	Total		
Jewish.....	419	294	813	220	1,033
Bohemian....	810	373	1,183	56	1,239
	1,229	667	1,996	276	2,272

In the Polish district on the Northwest Side, the recanvass included all of the ten blocks in the district investigated by the

City Homes Association committee in 1901. Table IV shows the block population as a result of the canvass last year and, for purposes of comparison, the population for the corresponding blocks as reported by the City Homes Association committee in 1901.

TABLE IV  
BLOCK POPULATION IN THE POLISH DISTRICT

	Block 45	Block 46	Block 47	Block 48	Block 49	Block 50	Block 51	Block 52	Block 53	Block 54	Total
Members of family groups.....	1,131	1,219	717	1,225	1,644	2,146	1,481	1,155	896	1,043	12,657
Lodgers.....	53	45	10	80	78	92	39	33	85	59	574
Total.....	1,184	1,264	727	1,305	1,722	2,238	1,520	1,188	981	1,102	13,231
Total City Homes, 1901*	1,135	1,202	1,182	1,160	1,816	2,327	1,601	1,315	979	1,113	13,830
Increase or de- crease 1901- 10.....	+49	+62	-455	+145	-94	-89	-81	-127	+2	-11	-599

\* See *Tenement House Conditions (City Homes Report)*, p. 195.

This table shows that the population of these ten blocks in the Sixteenth Ward was found to be 13,231 in the recent recanvass, an apparent decrease of 599 people since 1901. In Block 47, the clearing of a large area for the Kosciusko School was responsible for a real decrease of population in that block, and in nearly every block in this group some property has been taken over for industrial or commercial purposes which was used for residential purposes in 1901. There is reason, too, for believing that there is a much larger number of lodgers in this district than the recanvass showed. Very soon after the recanvass began, a report was circulated through the neighborhood which led the people to believe that the purpose of the investigation was to evict all the lodgers and there was, as a result, a frequent refusal to state that there were any lodgers taken or an attempt to understate the correct number. Investigators were instructed to run the risk of an understatement rather than an overstatement in all



cases of doubt, and there is no question but that, in this, as in other districts canvassed, the returns of the investigators invariably understate the overcrowding within the rooms. But even this understatement, as later tables show, indicates a most serious condition.

The recanvass in each of the three districts showed that in ten years the predominant nationality in the neighborhood had remained unchanged. The Ninth Ward remained Jewish, the Tenth Ward, Bohemian, and the Sixteenth Ward, Polish. Table V shows how large a proportion of the inhabitants of each of these districts belonged to the same foreign colony.

TABLE V  
NATIONALITY OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS (REVISED)

NATIONALITY	NUMBERS OF PERSONS OF SPECIFIED NATIONALITY IN		
	Ninth Ward (1 block)	Tenth Ward (1 block)	Sixteenth Ward (10 blocks)
American . . . . .	1	1	6
Bohemian . . . . .	1	263	7
German . . . . .	4	8	47
Irish . . . . .	1	1	3
Jewish . . . . .	112	..	11
Lithuanian . . . . .	36	..	19
Polish . . . . .	23	..	2,649
Russian . . . . .	7	..	3
Slovak . . . . .	3	5	3
Miscellaneous . . . . .	3	4	7
No report . . . . .	9	13	30
Total . . . . .	200	295	2,785

It has already been pointed out that the density of population in the wards in which the recanvassed districts are located is relatively high. Overcrowding, however, is more correctly indicated by the number of people per acre taken in conjunction with the kind of houses in which they live. In the Jewish block, the great majority of the houses are old frame buildings not more than two stories high, and the problem of overcrowding there is quite obviously a problem of overcrowding within the house and within the room. This whole district is naturally more dilapidated than the Bohemian and Polish districts in which



REAR TENEMENTS IN THE BOHEMIAN DISTRICT

the houses are newer<sup>2</sup> and higher<sup>3</sup> and more often substantially built brick buildings.<sup>4</sup> Even here, however, the houses were for the most part old. No new-law houses were found in the Bohemian block and only 19 in the ten Polish blocks. All of them were "old-law," that is, built before 1902, and some were there before the great fire, which it will be remembered started on DeKoven Street near Halsted, near the center of the district investigated.

In all of these districts there is a very high percentage of the

<sup>2</sup> The following table showing the conditions of the houses in the three districts as to repair is of further interest in this connection.

TABLE SHOWING STATE OF REPAIR OF HOUSES INVESTIGATED

STATE OF REPAIR	DISTRICT		
	Jewish	Bohemian	Polish
Good.....	18	41	534
Fair.....	27	19	163
Bad.....	20	8	36
No report.....	..	3	10
Total.....	65	71	743

<sup>3</sup> TABLE SHOWING NUMBER OF HOUSES OF SPECIFIED NUMBER OF STORIES IN EACH DISTRICT

NUMBER OF STORIES	DISTRICT		
	Jewish	Bohemian	Polish
One story.....	8	11	113
Two stories.....	42	24	346
Three stories.....	10	29	220
Four stories.....	5	7	48
Five stories.....	..	..	5
No report.....	..	..	2
Total.....	65	71	743

<sup>4</sup> TABLE SHOWING NUMBER OF BRICK AND FRAME HOUSES IN EACH DISTRICT

MATERIAL OF BUILDINGS	DISTRICT		
	Jewish	Bohemian	Polish
Brick.....	17	46	339
Frame.....	40	23	335
Partly brick and partly frame.....	8	2	65
No report.....	..	..	4
Total.....	65	71	743

lot area covered by buildings. The following table shows that on the West Side there are very few lots covered less than 50 per cent, a striking contrast in this respect with the newer and more outlying sections of the city, where the houses are not so close together, and the problem of overcrowding, when it exists, is almost exclusively a problem of overcrowding within the house and within the room.

TABLE VI  
PER CENT OF LOT COVERED

	Less than 50%	50% and less than 60%	60% and less than 70%	70% and less than 80%	80% and less than 90%	90% or more	No report	Total
Jewish block number . . .	2	5	0	12	6	22	0	47
<i>Per cent</i> . . . . .	4	11	0	26	13	46	..	100
Bohemian block number .	4	0	13	6	6	14	0	43
<i>Per cent</i> . . . . .	10	0	30	14	14	33	..	100
Polish (10 blocks) number	67	54	117	131	55	25	6	455
<i>Per cent</i> . . . . .	15	12	25	29	13	5	1	100

This table shows that the lot areas are largely covered in all of these neighborhoods, and that in the Jewish district where the houses are low they occupy a larger portion of the lots covered than do the higher brick tenements of the Bohemian and Polish districts. Later tables, however, will show that in all of these districts there is also serious room overcrowding. It should be further noted here, however, with reference to the covering of the lot, that in each of the three districts there are frequently two and sometimes three buildings on a lot. In the Jewish block there is no alley, and in several cases the rear buildings are so close together as to become almost "back-to-back" houses.

It was pointed out in an earlier article in this series that the alley or rear tenement is one of the most characteristic of the bad features of Chicago's housing problem. These rear houses are almost uniformly the old houses which have been "moved back" to make room for the larger and more imposing building on the front of the lot. The alley houses, therefore, are not only objectionable because the windows look out on the dirty, ill-smelling

alley, but because they are old, in poor repair, and, in general, without adequate sanitary provisions. The alley house is much

TABLE VIA  
NUMBER OF REAR OR ALLEY TENEMENTS

LOCATION	DISTRICT		
	Jewish	Bohemian	Polish
Front . . . . .	47	47	490
Middle . . . . .	1	1	8
Rear . . . . .	17	23	245
Total . . . . .	65	71	743

more frequently dependent upon a yard water-closet or privy than is the newly built front house.

A few houses in each district, as Table VII indicates, are private dwellings and not tenements. According to the defini-

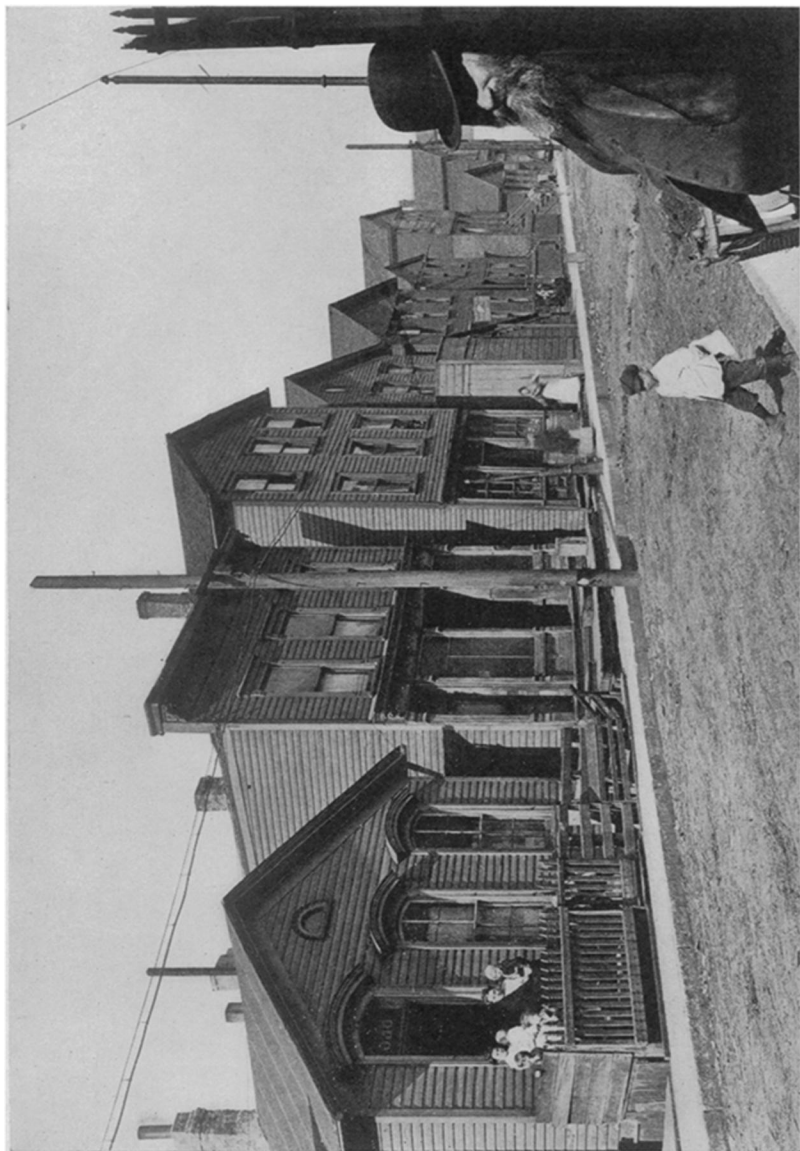
TABLE VII

NUMBER OF BUILDINGS	JEWISH	BOHEMIAN	POLISH	TOTAL NUMBER OF APARTMENTS		
				Jewish	Bohe- mian	Polish
Not used as dwellings . . . . .	2	1	9	..	..	..
With one apartment . . . . .	10	11	99	10	11	99
With two apartments . . . . .	17	15	168	34	30	336
With three apartments . . . . .	12	4	94	36	12	282
With four apartments . . . . .	10	8	117	40	32	468
With five apartments . . . . .	8	9	63	40	45	315
With six apartments . . . . .	3	14	141	18	84	846
With seven apartments . . . . .	2	3	18	14	21	126
With eight apartments . . . . .	1	1	16	8	8	128
With nine apartments . . . . .	..	2	8	..	18	72
With ten apartments . . . . .	..	1	4	..	10	40
With eleven apartments . . . . .	..	1	3	..	11	33
With more than eleven* . . . . .	..	1	2	..	14	40
Lodging-house . . . . .	..	..	1	..	..	..
Total . . . . .	65	71	743	200	296	2,785

\* The one building in the Bohemian district contained 14, the two in the Polish contained 17 and 23 apartments respectively.

tion of the code, a house is not a tenement and is not governed by the provisions of the tenement code<sup>5</sup> unless it "is used as a home or residence for two or more families living in separate

<sup>5</sup> Code 59-246, provisions governing class VI houses.



OLD HOUSES ON LIBERTY STREET, JEWISH DISTRICT

apartments." Table VII shows the number of houses containing one or more families as well as the number used exclusively for business or manufacturing purposes in each of the three districts, together with the total number of apartments. This table shows that only 93 out of the 2,575 apartments visited in the Polish district (3 per cent), 11 out of the 295 in the Bohemian district (4 per cent), and 10 out of the 200 in the Jewish district (5 per cent) are private dwellings and are regulated by the provisions of the building code which apply to "class III" houses, that is, dwellings for single families.<sup>6</sup>

It has not, however, seemed necessary in the following discussion to present two sets of tables for these two groups of dwellings since from 95 to 97 per cent of all the houses are tenements, and since bad housing conditions are just as insanitary for the single family in a private dwelling as for two families in a tenement, it seems best to avoid the confusion which would result from presenting two sets of tables. All of the houses visited, therefore, single as well as tenement, are included in the tables given in the following pages. If in 3 or 5 per cent of the cases where insanitary conditions were found, the law was not violated because the house was occupied by a single family, the condition was just as bad as if it were technically illegal. The public health is endangered by the presence of insanitary yard water-closets or privy vaults, whether the dwelling is occupied by one family or five.

In connection with the number of apartments in the house, it is of interest to know the number of rooms which the apartments contain, and Table VIII which shows the number of apartments having from one to nine rooms is an important one.

This table makes it clear that in these three West Side neighborhoods, as in the district back of the yards,<sup>7</sup> the four-room apartment is the prevailing type. It is also clear that the one-room apartment is an exception in every neighborhood. Seventeen one-room apartments were found in the fifteen blocks investigated in the stockyards district, fifteen were found in

<sup>6</sup> Code, secs. 243, 246.

<sup>7</sup> See *Am. Jour. Sociol.*, XVI, No. 4, p. 444.

ten blocks in the Polish district, only one in the Bohemian block, and none in the Jewish block.

TABLE VIII  
NUMBER OF APARTMENTS HAVING SPECIFIED NUMBER OF ROOMS

NUMBER OF ROOMS	DISTRICT			TOTAL ALL DISTRICTS
	Jewish One Block	Bohemian One Block	Polish Ten Blocks	
One room . . . . .	..	1	15	16
Two rooms . . . . .	29	17	146	192
Three rooms . . . . .	45	123	406	574
Four rooms . . . . .	67	111	1,862	2,040
Five rooms . . . . .	30	18	162	210
Six rooms . . . . .	17	11	129	157
Seven rooms . . . . .	6	3	21	30
Eight or more . . . . .	2	2	33	37
No report . . . . .	4	9	11	24
Total . . . . .	200	295	2,785	3,280

The location of the apartment is perhaps a question next in importance to size. Table IX shows that there are still a large number of cellar and basement apartments in all of these neighborhoods. It should be recalled that the code makes a careful

TABLE IX  
LOCATION OF APARTMENTS

LOCATION	DISTRICTS			TOTAL ALL DISTRICTS
	Jewish One Block	Bohemian One Block	Polish Ten Blocks	
Cellar . . . . .	6	15	186	207
Basement . . . . .	10	28	423	461
1st floor . . . . .	82	97	1,056	1,235
2d floor . . . . .	88	115	930	1,133
3d floor or above . . . . .	19	51	229	299
Counted twice* . . . . .	5	11	39	55
Total . . . . .	200	295	2,785	3,280

\* The apartments counted twice are those which had some rooms on one floor and some on another.

distinction between cellar and basement apartments. A "cellar" is a story more than one-half below the level of the street grade while a basement is a story partly but not more than one-half below this level.



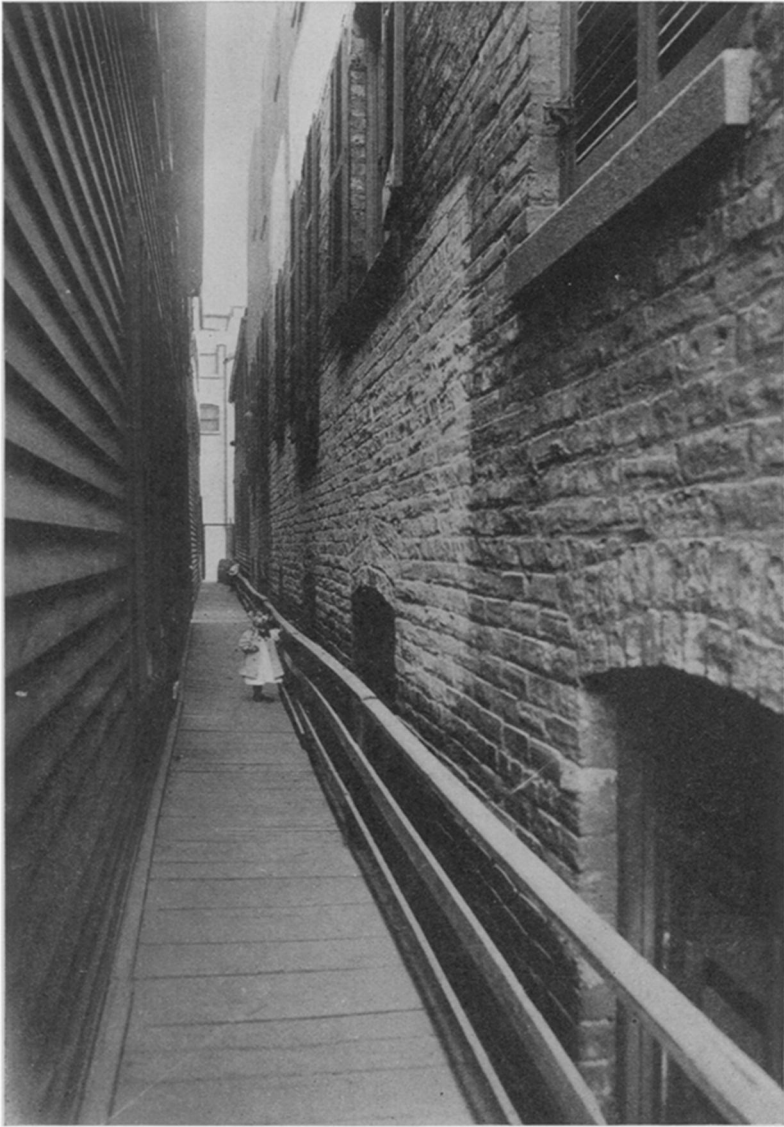
Table IX shows that although the code expressly prohibits any room in a cellar being "constructed, altered, converted, or occupied for living purposes,"<sup>8</sup> 207 of these prohibited apartments were found in the blocks canvassed. The basement apartment is not prohibited by the ordinance, but the fact that such apartments are often dark, damp, and unwholesome makes the fact that there were 461 basement apartments in these blocks further evidence of the bad housing conditions which prevail in these neighborhoods.

The presence of 668 cellar and basement apartments in these twelve blocks is due, no doubt, in large part to the grading of the streets after the erection of the buildings, so that a large number of yards are themselves below the street level.<sup>9</sup> A considerable number of the cellar and basement apartments were not much below the yard level, although they were below the street level, and while they still are likely to be damp and dark, they are not as objectionable as if they were actually underground. This grading of the streets undoubtedly explains in large measure the increase in the number of cellar and basement apartments in the last decade. In 1901, when the City Homes Association investigation was made, only 20 cellar apartments were found in the Jewish and Italian district of 44 blocks, and 6 were found in the single Jewish block which was recently recanvassed; only 32 were found in 1901 in the 8 blocks in the Bohemian district in contrast to 15 in a single block of that district in 1910, and 49 in the 10 Polish blocks in contrast to 186 in that district in 1910.

If conditions have grown worse with respect to the occupancy of cellar apartments, they have improved in some other respects. An ordinance passed in 1894 made it illegal for privy vaults to be maintained on premises where sewers were possible, but in 1901 when this ordinance was still in force, the City Homes Association's investigators found 1,581 privies in the 44 blocks east of Halsted Street, and these were used by 10,886 individuals in 2,308 families; that is, in 1901, 45 per cent of

<sup>8</sup> Code, secs. 398, 417, 430.

<sup>9</sup> Out of 455 premises, 381 were four feet or more than four feet below the street level.



**PASSAGE-WAY BETWEEN TENEMENTS IN POLISH DISTRICT**

all the families in this neighborhood were dependent upon these archaic, illegal, and dangerous toilet accommodations. The committee in 1901 also estimated that 52 per cent of all the families in the Polish district and 21 per cent of those in the Bohemian district were dependent on similar provisions.

It may, therefore, be accounted a very definite improvement in housing conditions that most of these offensive places have been removed within the last decade. In 1901, 71 outlawed vaults were found in the single Jewish block which was recanvassed; last year not one was found. In the recanvassed Bohemian block, a similar improvement had taken place, and there is reason to believe that there has been drastic action all through this neighborhood. In the Polish district where in 1901 it was estimated that 52 per cent of the families were using these offensive vaults, only 7 were found in the recent recanvass. The statistics published in an earlier study in this series for the blocks near the Stockyards showed that conditions in some of the newer and more outlying districts are still far from satisfactory. In the few blocks investigated back of the yards, 44 privies with 21 separate vaults were found by investigators last year. In these blocks 46 families and 248 persons were still using these insanitary vaults.

In spite of these improvements sanitary provisions in the West Side districts still leave much to be desired. In many places the vaults have been replaced by yard water-closets. The yard water-closet is almost equally a nuisance with the privy, but it has been outlawed for new tenements only. In the ten Polish blocks nearly 9,000 persons were still using yard water-closets; in the one Jewish block 165 persons, and in the single Bohemian block 145 families with 600 persons, were dependent upon these insanitary toilet accommodations. In these same 12 blocks, 324 hall and basement water-closets were found in the recent canvass and 108 of these were prohibited "long hoppers," so that it seems to be clear that in very few cases were the old vaults replaced by proper sanitary provisions.

The modern standard for toilet accommodation set by the present code for new tenements requires private toilet facilities for each apartment, except in the case of very small apartments



**ILLEGALLY CROWDED ROOM IN POLISH DISTRICT**

One man slept here by day, two adults and four children at night; the room contains 513 cubic feet.

containing only one or two rooms. Unfortunately, the same standard is not yet set for old houses, but considerations of decency require that in all houses, old as well as new, each family should have private toilet facilities within its own apartment. Table X, which shows the number of yard, basement, and hall water-closets in the 12 blocks investigated, shows how large an evil we still have in these public toilet facilities.

TABLE X

NUMBER OF YARD, HALL, AND BASEMENT CLOSETS IN TWELVE WEST SIDE BLOCKS

DISTRICT	LOCATION OF CLOSET			TOTAL
	Yard	Basement	Hall	
Jewish: one block. ....	26	22	26	74
Bohemian: one block. ....	67	19	41	127
Polish: ten blocks. ....	964	109	159	1,232
Total. ....	1,057	150	226	1,433

The presentation of totals in a table like this gives no adequate idea of the extremely insanitary cases which are sometimes found. In one case in the Polish district 30 persons were using a single yard closet; in another case in the Jewish district 25 people were using a single yard closet; in the Bohemian district several cases were found where 15 or 16 people were obliged to use a single closet of this sort.

An earlier article discussed the municipal regulations governing light and air and minimum cubic air space per person, and pointed out the large number of violations of these provisions found in the Stockyards district. That illegalities of the same kind are even more numerous in these West Side wards will appear in the following tables. It was pointed out in the earlier report that the provision which attempts to prevent overcrowding by requiring for each person a definite minimum of cubic air space is at once the most important and the most difficult to enforce of all the regulations governing interior housing conditions. The ordinance requires that every room in any tenement house, whether new or old, shall have 400 cubic feet of air for every adult person "living or sleeping" in the room, and 200

cubic feet of air for each child under twelve. The following tables for the Jewish block, the Bohemian block, and the group of ten Polish blocks show how frequently this law is violated in all of these neighborhoods. In each table the numbers above the heavy black line all represent cases of rooms without sufficient air space for the people sleeping in them.

It appears from these tables that in the one block in the Jewish district there were 229 sleeping-rooms, 51 per cent of the whole number, in which more people slept than the law regulating cubic air space allowed; in the Bohemian block 298 sleeping-rooms, 54 per cent of the entire number, were illegally crowded; in the ten Polish blocks, 3,328 rooms, or 69 per cent of the whole number, were crowded beyond the legal limit.

This statement of the total number of persons sleeping in rooms which do not contain the amount of cubic air space required by law fails to give any adequate idea of the extremely insanitary conditions found in some cases. In the Jewish district it was found, for example, that one man occupied as a bedroom a windowless clothes-closet containing only 18 square feet and 167 cubic feet, but large enough to hold a single bed. A

TABLE XI

THE NUMBER OF PERSONS SLEEPING IN ROOMS OF SPECIFIED CUBIC FEET CONTENTS  
A. JEWISH DISTRICT (NINTH WARD)

CONTENTS OF ROOM IN CUBIC FEET	NUMBER OF ROOMS OCCUPIED BY									TOTAL
	One Child	One Adult	One Adult and One Child	Two Adults	Two Adults and One Child	Three Adults	Three Adults and One Child	Four Adults	Five Adults	
Less than 400.	1	6	2	6	..	1	..	..	..	16
400 to 600 ..	3	43	13	50	13	15	1	1	..	141
600 to 800 ..	..	19	15	50	12	19	7	4	..	126
800 to 1,000.	1	10	4	15	5	9	1	..	1	46
1,000 to 1,200.	1	12	3	13	4	3	1	3	..	41
1,200 to 1,400.	2	16	6	7	1	3	2	1	..	38
1,400 to 1,600.	..	6	2	9	1	1	1	1	..	21
1,600 to 1,800.	..	4	1	3	..	1	2	1	..	12
1,800 and over	..	3	..	1	..	1	..	..	..	5
Total....	8	119	46	154	39	53	15	11	1	446

Total number of illegal cases 229 (51 per cent)

## B. BOHEMIAN DISTRICT (TENTH WARD)

CONTENTS OF ROOM IN CUBIC FEET	NUMBER OF ROOMS OCCUPIED BY										TOTAL
	One Child	One Adult	One Adult One Child	Two Adults	Two Adults One Child	Three Adults	Three Adults One Child	Four Adults	Five Adults	Five Adults One Child	
Less than 400.....	..	5	1	2	4	..	..	..	..	..	12
400 and less than 600	3	40	24	93	25	18	3	2	..	..	208
600 and less than 800	3	19	10	49	20	13	3	5	2	1	125
800 and less than 1,000.....	..	6	1	11	8	7	5	4	..	..	42
1,000 and less than 1,000.....	1	7	1	11	1	2	..	2	..	..	26
1,200 and less than 1,400.....	4	19	6	10	4	5	..	..	..	..	48
1,400 and less than 1,600.....	5	18	8	10	2	4	..	..	..	..	47
1,600 and less than 1,800.....	1	4	6	5	2	2	1	..	..	..	21
1,800 and over.....	1	5	2	8	1	1	..	..	..	..	18
Total.....	18	123	59	199	67	52	12	13	2	1	547

Total number of illegal cases 298  
(54 per cent)

## C. POLISH DISTRICT (16th Ward)

CONTENTS OF ROOM IN CUBIC FEET	NUMBER OF ROOMS OCCUPIED BY										TOTAL NUMBER OF ROOMS
	One Child	One Adult	One Adult and One Child	Two Adults	Two Adults and One Child	Three Adults	Three Adults and One Child	Four Adults	Four Adults and One Child	Five Adults or More	
Less than 400..	4	63	20	74	22	10	1	7	1	..	202
400 and less than 600.....	14	291	123	610	212	135	49	47	13	8	1,502
600 and less than 800.....	11	248	91	491	264	305	156	135	39	40	1,780
800 and less than 1,000...	7	82	26	172	103	120	82	83	16	13	704
1,000 and less than 1,200...	11	58	7	55	26	37	11	10	2	6	223
1,200 and less than 1,400...	24	68	18	38	15	8	5	4	3	1	184
1,400 and less than 1,600...	11	42	11	27	7	6	5	3	2	1	115
1,600 and less than 1,800...	8	19	3	18	3	1	1	1	..	1	55
1,800 and less than 2,000...	5	11	1	10	1	4	2	..	..	..	34
2,000 and more.	1	13	..	3	3	2	..	1	..	1	24
No report.....	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	2
Total number of rooms.....	96	896	300	1,498	657	628	312	291	76	71	4,825

Total number of illegal cases 3,328 (60 per cent)



**WINDOWLESS BEDROOM IN JEWISH DISTRICT**

Two adults and six children slept in one bed.



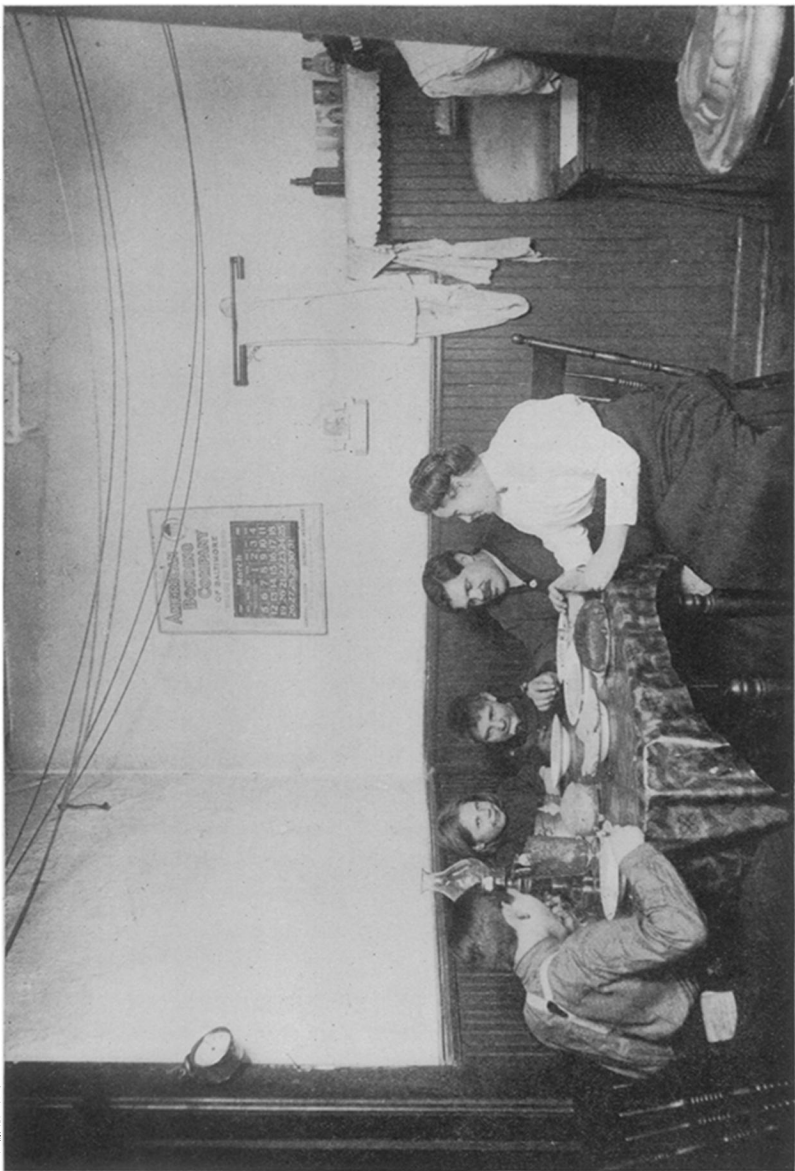
case much worse than this in the same block was that of a household in which all of the six members of the family slept not only in one room but in one bed, in order to make room for the ten lodgers who lived with them. Several other cases almost as bad as these were found in the same block. In one house, two people slept in a very dark room 34 feet square, which contained only 265 cubic feet, and which was so close to the adjoining house that it had neither light nor ventilation; in another house, four people slept in a room 46 feet square which contained only 371 cubic feet, although 1,600 was the required legal minimum; three people in another house slept in a room 53 feet square, and in still another case, five people slept in a room 65 feet square which contained 650 cubic feet instead of the 2,000 required by law. In the Bohemian district, another man slept in a closet 22 feet square, containing 198 cubic feet, six people slept in a room 7 by 10 feet which contained only 625 cubic feet.

The question of light and ventilation in these overcrowded rooms is a very important one. In an earlier article the provisions of the code relating to windows were discussed in some detail with reference to the groups of blocks studied in the Stockyards district.<sup>10</sup> The tables there given showed that the large number of dark and gloomy rooms that were found could not be explained because of inadequate window space. In a small percentage of cases there were windowless rooms and rooms in which the windows were not 10 per cent of the floor area of the room, as prescribed by the tenement code for new-law houses. The great majority of the dark and gloomy rooms, however, were found to be inadequately lighted because the windows opened on narrow passageways.

The recanvass of the West Side districts indicates that conditions in the Stockyards district are in this respect typical of those in the older tenement districts of the city. Table XII shows the number of dark and gloomy rooms found in each of the three districts visited.

This table shows that, in round numbers, one-fourth of the rooms in the Jewish and Bohemian districts and one-third of the

<sup>10</sup> See the third article in this series, *Am. Jour. Sociol.*, XVI, 452-55.



### THE LODGER PROBLEM ON THE WEST SIDE, I

Three small rooms, two of them windowless, occupied by a Lithuanian widow, her three children, four men lodgers, and one immigrant girl.

rooms in the Polish districts were dark or gloomy. Here, as in the district back of the yards, it was found that only a small portion of these inadequately lighted rooms were without windows or had windows which were less than 10 per cent of the floor area. In the case of only 19 of the 176 dark and gloomy

TABLE XII  
NUMBER OF LIGHT, GLOOMY, AND DARK ROOMS

DISTRICTS	LIGHT		GLOOMY		DARK		NO REPORT		TOTAL NUMBER
	Number	Percent- age	Number	Percent- age	Number	Percent- age	Number	Percent- age	
Jewish: one block.....	593	76.9	112	14.5	64	9.0	2	.6	771
Bohemian: one block.....	786	75.4	190	18.3	66	6.5	..	..	1,042
Polish: ten blocks.....	7,501	68.2	3,015	27.4	456	4.1	14	.1	10,986

rooms in the Jewish district, in only 8 of the 256 in the Bohemian district, and in only 155 of the 3,471 in the Polish district could the inadequate lighting be explained by lack of windows or insufficient window area. In these districts, as in the district "back of the yards," it was found that the great majority

TABLE XIII  
THE OUTLOOK OF WINDOWS IN DARK AND GLOOMY ROOMS

OUTLOOK	NUMBER OF ROOMS WITH SPECIFIED OUTLOOK IN		
	Jewish Block	Bohemian Block	Polish District, 10 Blocks
No window.....	5	18	31
Another room.....	4	18	30
Interior shaft or hall.....	9	51	146
Shaft, wall, under porch.....	36	6	111
Porch and court.....	8	..	2,917
Passage.....	110	153	233
Alley, yard, street, roof.....	4	7	3
No report.....	...	3	..
	176	256	3,471

of the dark and gloomy rooms had windows which opened upon narrow passageways. Table XIII will make this clear.

According to this table, 3,180 out of 3,903 inadequately



**THE LODGER PROBLEM ON THE WEST SIDE, II**

Apartment of four small rooms occupied by Lithuanian man and his wife, with three children, four men lodgers, and one immigrant girl.

lighted rooms (81 per cent) in these twelve blocks had windows which opened upon narrow "passageways." It should be explained that the word "passageway" is a figurative one used to

TABLE XIV  
NUMBER OF APARTMENTS FOR WHICH SPECIFIED MONTHLY RENTALS ARE PAID,  
TOGETHER WITH NUMBER OF ROOMS  
A. JEWISH DISTRICT (ONE BLOCK)

RENT PER MONTH	NUMBER OF APARTMENTS OF SPECIFIED RENTALS HAVING						TOTAL
	Two* Rooms	Three Rooms	Four Rooms	Five Rooms	Six or More Rooms	No Report	
Less than \$3.00.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
\$3 and less than \$3.50.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
\$3.50 and less than \$4.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
\$4 and less than \$4.50.....	3	..	..	..	..	..	3
\$4.50 and less than \$5.....	1	..	..	..	..	..	1
\$5 and less than \$5.50.....	6	2	3	..	..	..	11
\$5.50 and less than \$6.....	..	1	..	..	..	..	1
\$6 and less than \$6.50.....	11	10	..	1	..	..	22
\$6.50 and less than \$7.....	1	1	..	..	..	..	2
\$7 and less than \$7.50.....	3	12	3	..	..	..	18
\$7.50 and less than \$8.....	..	1	1	..	..	..	2
\$8 and less than \$8.50.....	..	8	4	3	1	..	16
\$8.50 and less than \$9.....	..	..	2	2	..	..	4
\$9 and less than \$9.50.....	..	..	8	..	..	..	8
\$9.50 and less than \$10.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
\$10 and less than \$10.50.....	..	1	17	3	1	..	22
\$10.50 and less than \$11.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
\$11 and less than \$11.50.....	..	..	4	2	..	..	6
\$11.50 and less than \$12.....	..	..	1	..	..	..	1
\$12 and less than \$12.50.....	..	..	6	2	1	..	9
\$12.50 and less than \$13.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
\$13 and less than \$13.50.....	..	..	2	2	2	..	6
\$13.50 and \$14.....	..	..	2	3	..	..	5
\$14.50 and less than \$15.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
\$15 and more.....	..	1	1	5	13	..	20
No report.....	2	7	7	4	2	..	22
Number of apartments rented...	27	44	61	27	20	..	179
Number owned.....	2	1	6	3	5	..	17
No report.....	..	..	..	..	..	4	4
Total.....	29	45	67	30	25	4	200

\* No one-room apartments were found in this block.

describe the long, narrow lot-line court which is often much too narrow to serve as a bona-fide passage way. This brings us again face to face with the fact, that the essential factor in Chi-

cago's housing problem is the so-called "shoe-string" lot which characterizes all parts of Chicago. We are again face to face with the fact that adequate remedial measures can only come with a larger control than that exercised within the lot, and must take into account the size and shape of the lot itself.

TABLE XIV—*Continued*  
B. BOHEMIAN DISTRICT (ONE BLOCK)

RENT PER MONTH	NUMBER OF APARTMENTS OF SPECIFIED RENTALS HAVING						TOTAL
	One Room	Two Rooms	Three Rooms	Four Rooms	Five Rooms	Six or More Rooms	
\$3.00 and less than \$4.00....	..	2	..	..	..	..	2
\$4.00 and less than \$4.50....	..	3	2	..	..	..	5
\$4.50 and less than \$5.00....	..	3	2	..	..	..	4
\$5.00 and less than \$5.50....	..	5	11	3	..	..	19
\$5.50 and less than \$6.00....	..	..	7	1	..	..	7
\$6.00 and less than \$6.50....	..	..	24	8	..	..	31
\$6.50 and less than \$7.00....	..	..	11	6	..	..	17
\$7.00 and less than \$7.50....	..	..	31	15	..	..	45
\$7.50 and less than \$8.00....	..	..	7	7	..	..	13
\$8.00 and less than \$8.50....	..	..	13	29	1	..	42
\$8.50 and less than \$9.00....	..	..	1	9	..	..	10
\$9.00 and less than \$9.50....	..	..	2	8	1	..	11
\$9.50 and less than \$10.00....	..	..	..	1	..	..	1
\$10.00 and less than \$10.50..	..	..	..	5	2	1	8
\$10.50 and less than \$11.00..	..	..	..	1	..	..	1
\$11.00 and less than \$11.50..	..	..	..	2	..	1	3
\$12.00 and less than \$12.50..	..	..	1	1	2	..	4
\$15.00 and more.....	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
No report or vacant.....	1	3	6	7	1	2	20
Total number apartments rented.....	1	16	118	103	8	2	250
Number owned.....	..	1	5	8	10	11	36
No report.....	..	..	..	..	..	..	9
Total.....	1	17	121	111	18	17	295

A question of great interest in connection with the study of these West Side neighborhoods is that of rent. It was pointed out in an earlier article that it is impossible to discuss the question of tenement rents intelligently when no data of family earnings are accessible. It is, however, of interest to know the actual rents paid in different neighborhoods. It is, of course, necessary to present a separate table for each district in order to show the relation of the rent paid to the number of rooms obtained.

Several interesting points should be noted in connection with these tables. In the first place, the number of "tenement landlords," of whom mention was made somewhat at length in a

TABLE XIV—*Continued*  
C. POLISH DISTRICT (TEN BLOCKS)

RENT PER MONTH	NUMBER OF APARTMENTS OF SPECIFIED RENTALS HAVING							TOTAL
	One Room	Two Rooms	Three Rooms	Four Rooms	Five Rooms	Six or More Rooms	No Report	
Less than \$3.00.....	3	4	...	2	...	...	...	9
\$3 and less than \$3.50...	2	14	7	1	...	...	...	24
\$3.50 and less than \$4...	1	16	6	4	...	...	...	27
\$4 and less than \$4.50...	1	24	22	6	...	...	...	53
\$4.50 and less than \$5...	..	19	9	7	...	...	...	35
\$5 and less than \$5.50...	1	36	86	49	1	1	...	174
\$5.50 and less than \$6...	..	9	35	41	...	...	...	85
\$6 and less than \$6.50...	..	8	102	165	2	...	...	277
\$6.50 and less than \$7...	..	4	19	84	3	...	...	110
\$7 and less than \$7.50...	..	1	47	284	11	2	...	345
\$7.50 and less than \$8...	..	1	12	151	2	...	...	166
\$8 and less than \$8.50...	..	...	9	378	10	2	...	399
\$8.50 and less than \$9...	..	...	1	107	2	...	...	110
\$9 and less than \$9.50...	..	1	6	172	6	7	...	192
\$9.50 and less than \$10...	..	...	...	24	1	...	...	25
\$10 and less than \$10.50	..	...	...	94	15	8	...	117
\$10.50 and less than \$11...	..	...	...	4	...	...	...	4
\$11 and less than \$11.50...	..	...	...	34	4	7	...	45
\$11.50 and less than \$12...	..	...	...	1	1	...	...	2
\$12 and less than \$12.50...	1	...	1	10	8	7	...	27
\$12.50 and less than \$13...	..	...	...	1	..	...	...	1
\$13 and less than \$13.50...	..	...	1	4	6	5	...	16
\$13.50 and less than \$14...	..	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
\$14 and less than \$14.50...	..	...	...	8	2	6	...	16
\$14.50 and less than \$15...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
\$15 or more.....	..	...	...	4	8	25	...	37
Vacant and no report....	5	3	15	57	24	16	4	124
Total number of apartments rented.....	14	140	378	1,693	106	86	4	2,421
Total number of apartments owned.....	1	6	28	169	56	95	...	355
No report.....	..	...	...	...	...	2	7	9
Total.....	15	146	406	1,862	162	183	15	2,785

previous article,<sup>11</sup> is relatively smaller in the Jewish than in either of the other districts, although they are fewer there than back of the yards. In the Jewish block 17 out of 195 apartments or 9 per cent were owned by their occupants, while in the Bohemian

<sup>11</sup> *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XVI, pp. 461, 462.

the number was 36 out of 295 or 12 per cent, in the Polish 355 out of 2,785 or 13 per cent, and in the Stockyards district the percentage rose to 48 per cent.

These tables, given in such detail, seem so complicated as to make comparisons between the different districts with reference to rent difficult. An easy method for making such comparison is, however, to select the median and quartiles for each district for apartments having the same number of rooms. Table XV shows for the prevailing four-room apartment the rental group in which the median together with the upper and lower quartiles are found for each district.

TABLE XV  
MEDIAN RENTALS AND FIRST AND SECOND QUANTILES FOR FOUR DIFFERENT DISTRICTS

	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Jewish . . . . .	\$0.00-\$9.50	\$10.00-\$10.50	\$12.00-\$12.50
Bohemian . . . . .	7.00- 7.50	8.00- 8.50	8.50- 9.00
Polish . . . . .	7.00- 7.50	8.00- 8.50	8.50- 9.00
Stockyards . . . . .	7.00- 7.50	8.00- 8.50	10.00- 10.50

From this table it appears that for accommodations similar in respect to number of rooms, the rent paid in the Jewish district is distinctly higher than in either of the other two neighborhoods. When the dilapidated conditions prevailing in the Jewish district are recalled it seems probable that the difference is in fact greater than here appears. It is possible that in the difference indicated here there is a suggestion of racial exploitation; or this may be simply due to the Jewish practice of staying with their kind, even though heavy costs must be paid for so doing.

In connection with these rent tables reference should also be made to the number of lodgers in these districts. From tables III and IV it appears that lodgers constitute 21 per cent of the block population in the Jewish block. In the Bohemian and the Polish districts they constitute in each case only 4 per cent. It has been pointed out before that the "lodger evil" is often the occasion as well as the result of high rent.<sup>12</sup> And the number of

<sup>12</sup> Article cited, p. 456.



lodgers in the Jewish district is undoubtedly connected with the serious burden which rent constitutes in the family budgets in this neighborhood. It cannot, however, be a determining factor, because, while lodgers constitute 21 per cent of the population here, they constitute  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent of the population back of the yards where the rents seem to correspond closely with those in the Bohemian and Polish districts.

In conclusion attention may again be called to the fact that the purpose of this recanvass of these West Side blocks was to ascertain how far the valuable report on Chicago housing conditions, which had been published by the City Homes Association in 1901, might still be applicable. If conditions which existed then were still unchanged, it seemed important that that fact should be known. It was, of course, necessary to use in this portion of our investigation the same schedules and methods which we were using in other sections of the city in order that all of our material might be properly comparable. As a result, some of our tables are in form unlike those published in the earlier report. These new data, however, proved to be comparable in the most essential points with the data published in *Tenement House Conditions* ten years ago, and it is possible to take stock, as it were, of the results of the earnest and intelligent efforts which have been made in behalf of housing reform in Chicago during these years.

In the preceding pages we have noted one striking improvement in the decade that has elapsed since the investigating committee of the City Homes Association completed its work—the removal of the noxious privy vault. It should also be noted that outside conditions have been somewhat improved. New sidewalks have been laid and streets have been paved. It must be pointed out, however, that the benefits which should have come from these street improvements have been lost because of the failure to set and maintain proper standards of cleanliness and care. At present, the methods of cleaning are so out of date and so inadequate that pavements, sidewalks, and alleys alike become a public menace and a public shame.

If there is little to be said of improvements during the last ten years, there is much to be said of lack of improvements. In spite of the interest aroused by the publication of the City Homes Association report, the enactment of a "tenement code," the appointment of able officials to control the Health Department and Sanitary Bureau, we still find the same overcrowded areas, alley tenements, dilapidated houses, oppressive density of population, families in outlawed cellar apartments, in dark and gloomy rooms, and in a condition of overcrowding which violates all standards of decency and health.

Some bitter lessons have been learned during these ten years and unfortunately others still remain to be learned. Housing laws do not enforce themselves and no city department can enforce such laws unless a sufficient staff of competent inspectors is provided. In an earlier article in this series it was pointed out that the appropriation made for the inspectional purposes of the health department in Chicago is grossly inadequate and, if it is compared with appropriations for similar work in New York, little short of ridiculous. It is therefore a result of our short-sighted public policy in failing to provide the necessary funds to make a good law operative that the evils which the community has condemned and supposedly abolished still remain. It is not a matter of surprise, therefore, that the recanvass of these twelve West Side blocks has brought to light large numbers of cases where the different provisions of the tenement code are violated; that 207 cellar apartments were found, although the law provides that no cellar can be used for living purposes; that 2,703 rooms were found under 70 square feet in area, the minimum size now prescribed by law; that 3,132 rooms were found under 8½ feet high, the minimum height now prescribed; that in 431 rooms the window area was less than 10 per cent of the floor area, the standard set for new houses; that 54 windowless rooms were found, and 258 rooms which were practically windowless since the windows instead of opening to the air merely opened into another room; that, in addition to these airless rooms, there were 3,903 dark and gloomy rooms; that 1,433 families were without

toilet facilities in their apartments and were using public toilet accommodations in the yard, basement, or hall; that 3,855 sleeping-rooms were crowded beyond the legal limit, which prescribes 400 cubic feet of air for every adult and 200 cubic feet for every child under twelve. No further word seems necessary in conclusion, for it is hoped that this brief statistical summary will speak more forcibly than words of Chicago's long neglect of duty in making proper provision for the maintenance of modern standards of housing and public health.

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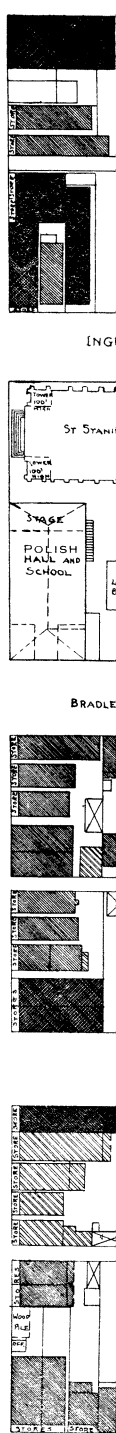
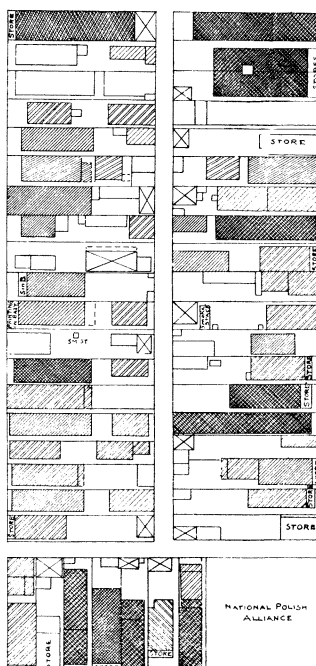
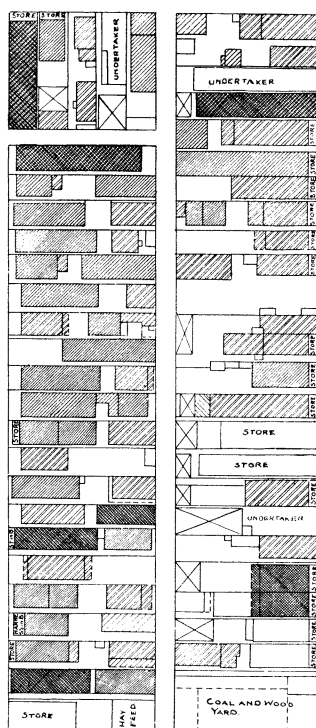
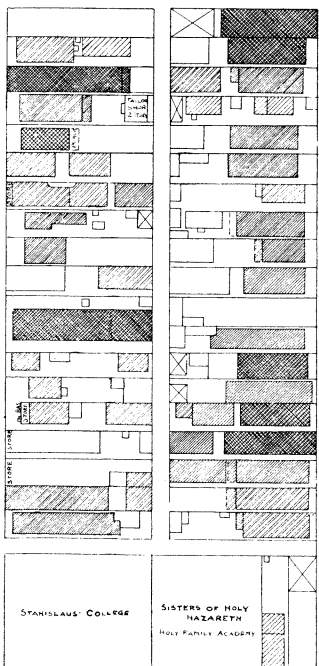
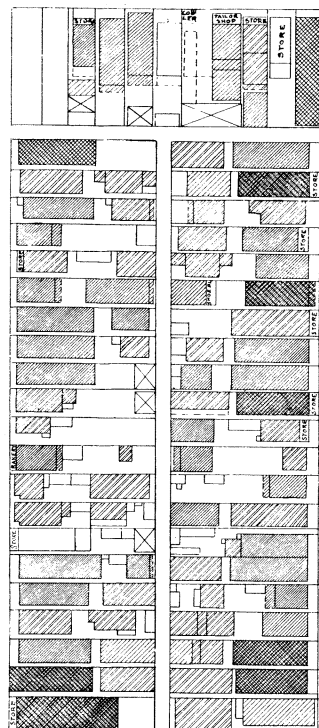
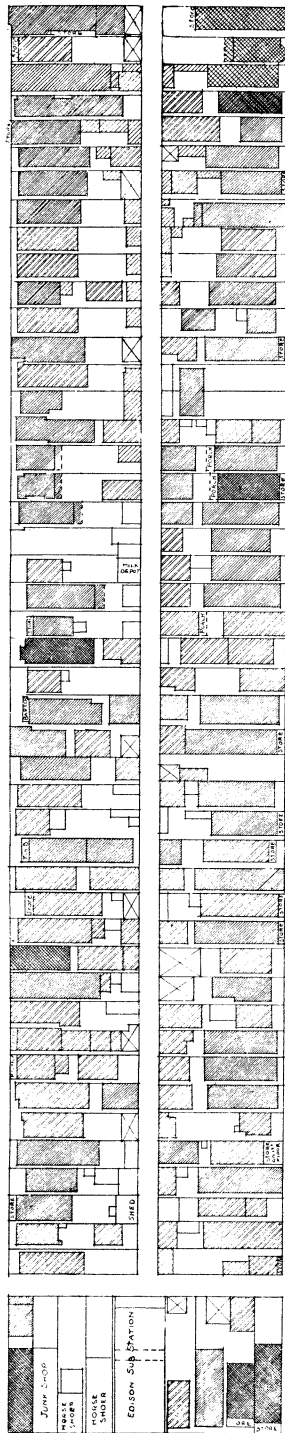
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BRADLEY ST

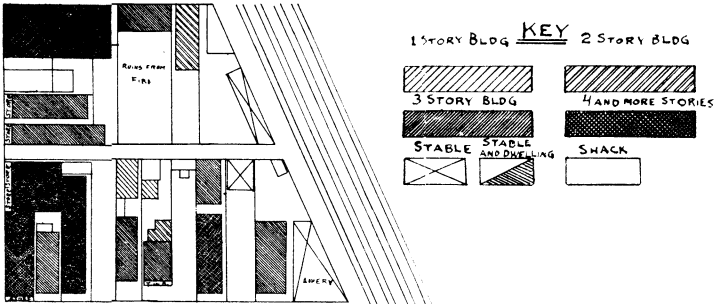
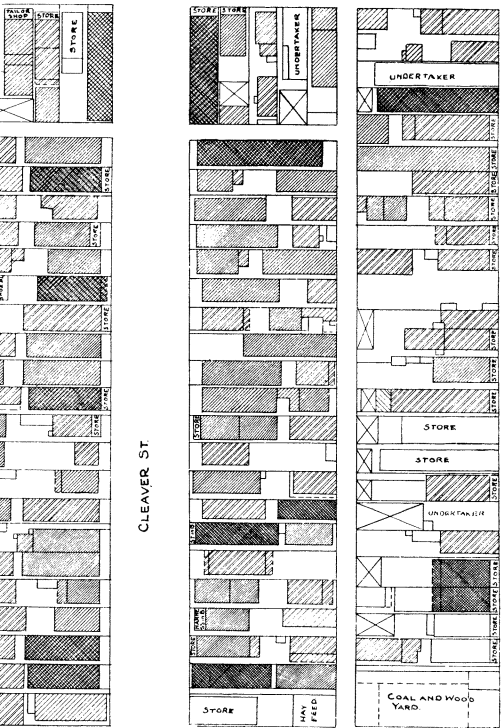
WEST DIVISION ST.

MAP OF A PORTION OF POLISH DISTRICT NEAR ST. STANISLAUS CHURCH, SHOWING

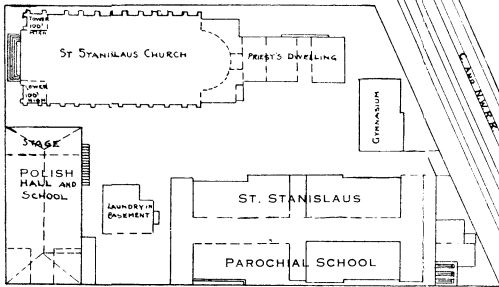


ST

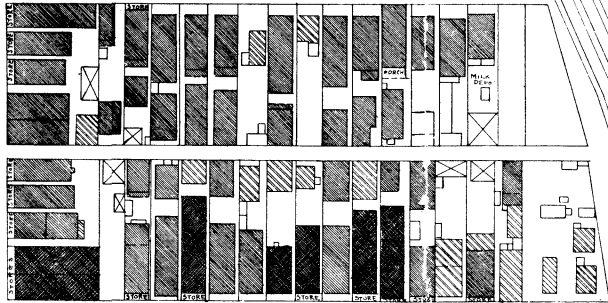
BLACKHAWK ST



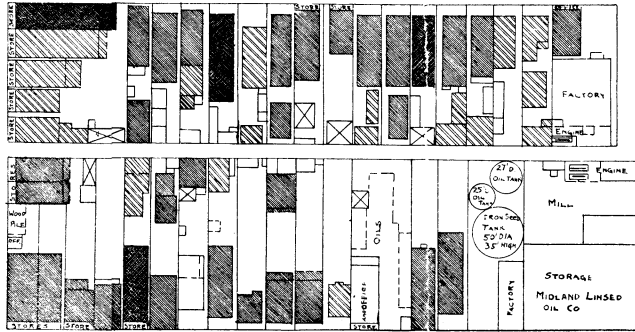
INGRAHAM ST



BRADLEY ST



SLOAN ST



W DIVISION ST

ST.

OF POLISH DISTRICT NEAR ST. STANISLAUS CHURCH, SHOWING CROWDING OF HOUSES